

Shasta-Trinity Backcountry Trail Crew
May 2013 Overview
Supervisor: Julian Wischniewski

“For when you climb, it is the mountain as much as your own legs that lift you upwards.”

Upon our arrival to Rancho del Oso, the fertile canyon on the Pacific Coast part of Big Basin State Park, we were greeted by our friendly sponsoring staff- Jose, Matt, Shawn, Kyle, and the Boss man himself—Chris Pereira. We immediately began to set up camp, an intricate and labor intensive task that the Shasta-T was eager to prove itself in. We arrived on a Friday, giving us the entire weekend to make sure everything was dialed and that all of our ducks were in a row. Much time was dedicated to learning each chore—from splitting wood to bowing dishwater, to ensure our tools were in working order, our day packs were ready, and had a place to live. With more chores to come once we arrived to the Trinity Alps Wilderness, we have quickly learned the pace of this camp. After a cowboy coffee brewing demonstration by Ian McDonald, aka “Hayduke Coffee-Hoss,” our first coffee-party commenced well into our first Saturday—the moon bright and full over the ocean and redwoods.

The first week of work was packed with more information about trail work, some botany, pruning, hazards of the work, and the wild; more information than you could shake a stick at. We had plenty of time to think about this valuable information on our long hikes to, from, and during work. The Clark-connector and Westridge trails tested the crew, gave strength to those who’ve never hiked before, and humbled the strong hikers at the same time, a fitting introduction to the Backcountry. The trail runs from sea level to 1600 feet, through coastal plains and grasses to redwoods, to manzanita in the chaparral, and finally to an exposed limestone mountain top; an epic hike just in our backyard. On these trails we pushed and cleaned drains that had filled with sediments. We ate our lunch under the redwoods as tall as small skyscrapers, powdered our feet and changed socks as banana slugs scooted by.

We’ve had many guests for our evening classes so far. Thanks to everyone who came out and gave us their time. We love guests! Kirby Fosgate came in to give us the scoop on the human history of Rancho de Oso, along with many entertaining tangents that we ate up. Scott Piedman came in and identified rare and very beautiful flowers to watch for when at work. Brad Loe came and surprised us all with the fascinating aspects of elephant seals—“...and after they dive to 3,000 ft. or so, they fall asleep and drift mid-dive like a fallen leaf...” Paul Fewel got us excited about timber history and showed off his stash of historic tools. Ziad Bwashari had us over his pad across the canyon for a discussion on working for State Parks as a Ranger. Juan Villarino gave us an intimate look at the life of Cesar Chavez and what it means to serve and how our Backcountry experience falls into that service-tradition. Thank you Juan for the Wu-Tang Clan- name – generator –list, the crew loved it!

Big Basin, as you can see, was jam-packed with curriculum that will enrich us on our season. Thanks a ton to Chris Pereira for helping organize much of the evening classes. Aside from adjusting and learning a ton, the crew put some miles on their feet on their weekend trips to the high country, overlooking the coast in Big Basin, Butano, and Nisene Marks State Park. When not romping through the redwoods and chaparral, miles were earned on the grade, at work. I’m happy to announce the

totals of this first month. We have a strong crew that will only get stronger as we head into the land of towering granite peaks, waterfalls, cold, ice and mud.

Work Production Totals as we begin a new phase in our season:

Maintenance miles: 45.5 miles

Seasoned bridge construction- 153 LY of seasoned bridge construction

Single Tier Walls: 6 LY

New Trail/ Reroute: 41 LY

Rehab 33 LY

Split rail fence 58 LY

We are excited to meet our new sponsor, Holly, and our cook, Bonnie, in the Trinity Alps. The high country will have a whole new set of challenges for us and we are ready to meet them to own them and guide each other through. We are truly lucky!